

Executive Potential Program

The **Executive Potential Program (EPP)** is a yearlong competency-based leadership program that helps transform successful GS 13-15 federal employees into effective leaders through a carefully designed program that includes assessment, training, team activities and developmental assignments.

The Program is based on the Office of Personnel Management's [Executive Core Qualifications](#) (ECQs) and the Graduate School, USDA's Leadership Effectiveness Inventory (LEI).

Participants engage in classroom discussions, group exercises, learning teams and independent studies. According to Walt Besecker, SES Faculty Coach for the Graduate School, USDA, "The EPP provides participants with the keys to self-awareness and the tools to refine their leadership skills. The program challenges its participants to step outside their comfort level, to sample new environments and to stretch, grow, contribute and make a difference." With a curriculum based on experiential learning and supported by classroom instruction, the individual components include:

- 360-Degree Feedback Assessment Leadership Effectiveness Inventory (LEI)
- Leadership Development Plan
- Experiential Learning Teams/Projects
- Senior Executive Mentor
- Four One-Week Residential Sessions
- Developmental Work Assignments
- Senior Executive Interviews and Shadowing Assignments
- Benchmarking

Experiential Learning Teams/Projects During orientation; participants are assigned to a Learning Team. Each team will obtain sponsorship from a senior level manager and act as consultants researching a current sponsoring organization issue. Upon project completion each team gives a report and presentation to the Graduate School and the sponsor. Experiential Learning Projects strengthen leadership and interpersonal skills, and encourage participants to become more self-directed, action-oriented and visionary. They also provide a forum for exploring issues facing federal leaders and for practicing leadership techniques. SES executives-in-residence offer coaching and mentoring to experiential learning teams at each residential session.

Residential Sessions

Participants attend four intensive one-week residential sessions. The orientation session focuses on individual developmental needs, team building, leadership skills, experiential learning, project identification and project planning. Program requirements, policies, expectations and opportunities are also outlined. The remaining three residential sessions will concentrate on the following ECQs:

- Leading Change
- Leading People
- Managing for Results
- Building Coalitions/Communication

Expert consultants from the federal and academic community conduct workshops and half-day seminars where participants learn effective techniques and methods for exercising essential leadership competencies related to the ECQ's. Formal and informal discussions continue into the evening. Residential sessions are held outside of the Washington, D.C. area.

Developmental Assignments

Participants must complete two 60-day developmental assignments away from the current position. During these assignments, participants learn to adapt and successfully lead in a new position and culture by utilizing the techniques and methods presented at residential sessions. In addition, each participant must conduct five senior executive interviews and complete a three-day assignment shadowing a high-level official. These assignments provide exposure and visibility at the highest levels of agency leadership as well as critical knowledge for long-term career planning.

Benchmarking

The Executive Potential Program uses benchmarking processes to identify outstanding leadership practices in public service, business, industry and academia.

Participants will have an opportunity to visit federal, state and local governments, major corporations, universities and nonprofit organizations and dialogue with "best practice" leaders. Through benchmarking, Executive Potential Program participants become skilled at using dialogue to gain insight beyond their individual understanding, an essential skill for leaders responsible for strategic planning.

Program Time Requirements

Participants are expected to be away from current positions for a minimum of six months over the course of the program. Participants may schedule developmental activities to minimize disruptions of their normal workflow.

Nomination Procedure

To be considered for the program, nomination packages should be sent by the appropriate agency official and must include:

- A completed Graduate School, USDA [Program Application Form](#)
- A current [OF-612](#), resume, or equivalent documentation signed and dated by the applicant showing current home address
- Training forms or payment documents with complete billing information and authorizing signatures ([SF-182](#), [DD 1556](#) or equivalent)

Orientation Week: May 6-11, 2007 Gettysburg, PA

Leadership Training: August 5-10, 2007

Leadership Training: January 27 – February 2, 2008

Graduation: May 13-19, 2008